

## Section 508 Compliance Standards

### Introduction

Section 508 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the Federal government be accessible to people with disabilities. On August 7, 1998, the President signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which includes the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Section 508 was originally added to the Rehabilitation Act in 1986; the 1998 amendments significantly expand and strengthen the technology access requirements in Section 508.

Federal agencies will use Section 508 standards in all their electronic and information technology acquisitions. Consistent government-wide standards will make it easier for Federal agencies to meet their existing obligations to make their technology systems accessible to people with disabilities, and will promote competition in the technology industry by clarifying the Federal market's requirement for accessibility in products intended for general use. The new version of Section 508 also establishes a complaint procedure and reporting requirements, which further strengthen the law.

Section 508 applies to Federal departments and agencies.

### Testing FSA's IT & Electronic Software for 508 Compliance

All FSA Information Technology and Electronic applications must be 508 compliant. Contact FSA's 508 Coordinator, at [Christine.Williams@ed.gov](mailto:Christine.Williams@ed.gov) to schedule 508 testing for new development and maintenance projects. FSA has incorporated Section 508 compliance into its Technology Standards, Software Life Cycle, Production Readiness Review, Business Cases, and its Modernization Applications.

All web pages, IT, and electronic applications are subject to an Accessibility Review by the CIO Assistive Technology Team. It is highly recommended that testing, and questions regarding site accessibility be raised early in the development cycle.

### Selected ED References:

- U.S. Department of Education Requirement for Accessibility Software Design Standards at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCFO/contracts/clibrary/software.html>

### **Selected U.S. Government References:** DISCLAIMER

- On December 21, 2000, the Access Board published [Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#).
- The [Federal Information Technology Accessibility Initiative](#) (FITAI)—Agency Partnerships Promoting Accessibility—offers Section 508 technical assistance.
- On August 7, 1998, the Workforce Investment Act included reauthorization of [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#). On April 2, 1999, the Attorney General issued a [Memorandum for the Heads of All Federal Agencies](#) advising all them of the requirements of Section 508.

### **Selected Non-Government References:** DISCLAIMER

- For Internet publishing, there are [detailed specifications](#) and [Quick Tips to make Accessible Web Sites](#). These resources are maintained by the [W3C](#) [WAI](#).

